

you want?" said I. "Chukembégn is going to leave me." "Oh, no, he isn't." ⁵⁸⁶
 "Yes, he is. He said so up the river and they are talking about it." "But he
 is not going to leave you." "How do you know?" "He told me." "What did
 he tell you?" "He told me that he loves you." I used the strongest term that
 the language has to offer, a term that I heard used only in folktales. "But
 he is going to leave me. Julio, if he leaves me, will you marry me?" "No,"
 said I; "I never marry anyone." And there the matter rested.¹

A man separated from his wife may live with someone else and share ⁵⁸¹
 his fire. At the worst he can cook his own meals and spread his own bed, ⁵⁹³
 for no shame attaches to a man who does a woman's work. But after ⁵⁵⁵
 a woman has borne three children a marriage does not break up. The ⁷⁶⁴
 woman needs the man to take care of her children, and Kaingáng men are ⁷⁶⁶
 fond fathers. There is no end to the fondling and delousing a child gets
 from its father and other men. He makes toys for it and takes it hunting
 for company. Nowadays they are as much interested in having their little
 girls decked out in brand new calico dresses as American mothers are in
 getting their children permanent waves. Even in death parents do not re-
 linquish their children, for, they say, a child who dies before the age of
 about twelve returns to its mother's womb and is reborn. The corpse of a
 grown-up is placed on the funeral pyre, pounded on the chest and told to
 go away, and summarily burnt. But, I was told, a little child is placed in a
 grave, covered with wholesome herbs and begged to return. Its mother
 puts a little honey and meat aside for it, puts her baby's carrying-band on
 her head and walks about crying, "Come here, come here! Come and eat
 the meat and honey I have put aside for you. If you stay in some other
 camp one will be angry with you! Come back! Come back!"

Except for the somewhat aberrant Chukembégn there is not a single case ⁵⁸⁶
 of a marriage dissolved after three children had been born. Chukembégn
 was a child of about nine when the Kaingáng settled on the reservation,
 and he grew up in close contact with the agent. He married Tendó but
 left her after she had borne him three children. His present wife, Chantágn,
 "led him away by the hand." Now he rarely goes near Tendó, but she is
 still regarded as his wife. Two years after leaving her he still buys cloth
 for her to make dresses for herself and her children. Yet idle tongues will
 wag, and one day when Chukembégn, Klendó, and I were hunting to-
 gether, Chukembégn burst out: "It is not true that I ignore her. I got medi-
 cine and bought a chicken for her when she was ill!" Klendó observed
 mildly that he had never said that Chukembégn had not taken care of her.
 Then Chukembégn, turning to me, blurted in Portuguese: "This man has

¹I mention this, and other ones in which I myself have been one of the actors, not because
 they are the only instances of the kind that I have, but because they are usually the most
 complete.

157 but they were never the equals in accomplishment of the men of middle age and over. So positive judgments were not made of young men. They were just *kêlé*, who had yet to make many attacks on the Brazilians and who had yet to bathe their spoon-shaped lance blades in the blood of a vendetta enemy. We can understand now why a man's *awikéysé* did not influence a young woman in the choice of a husband, for all men were assumed to be *awikéysé* and only the warriors of middle age or over could be adjudged as outstanding.

582 If the absence of emphasis on hunting skill, the knowledge that relatives will always feed them, and the lack of expectation of great deeds from *kêlé* effectually muffled all estimates of young men, the concentration of vital effort in the hands of males and the scarcity of women with a number of brothers eliminated the necessity for judging of *awikéysé*,⁹ young women. After all, what could they do? What techniques did they have that men had not? Only the increasingly unimportant techniques of textile weaving and pottery. The most important occupations, hunting and basketry, were masculine. As for brothers-in-law, they were good to have, and polygyny that did not provide them was to be avoided, but the small and scattered populations made it impossible to demand brothers-in-law as one of the conditions of marriage. Marriage among the young people was and still is, therefore, largely a matter of chance. It is the crystallizing-out of informal sexual relations, which may be due solely to their own initiative, when the couple feel that their needs will be satisfied by the relationship or when they may be instigated by some one of their relatives who sees that they are lovers and decides that they ought to live together.

593 If human beings followed our ideas of consistency the ethnologist's task
584 of investigation and understanding would be simple. If the Kaingang were eager to marry off the daughters for whom they have such a difficult time in providing, it would be perfectly understandable. But the Kaingang see parents as so attached to their daughters, so full of misgivings at the fate that might await them at the hands of their husbands, that they sometimes have fits of anger when they are approached by a go-between. They are sometimes pictured as clinging to a daughter so strongly that they must be asked to "let her alone." Not the parents, but some other member of the family, a brother or an uncle, is often the one who is concerned because a son or daughter is without a spouse. With certain reservations, the following conversation is typical of a dozen others that I recorded.

When Tondéin became interested in marrying off his cousin's son Vomblé, he went to the latter's father and said, "I am going to ask Kembléin

⁹ *st.*, woman, *élys*, fat (noun or adjective), *said* of animals; *hewé* desirable; also, new or fresh, *said* of tools or weapons.

573 for one of his children." Kemblén was Tondúin's younger brother. "For
 584 whom are you going to ask him for one?" "For [your son] Vomblé. He is
 full-grown, but he has no wife. I have been waiting for someone or other
 to send a daughter to him, but they never do; so I am going to send one of
 Kemblén's daughters to him." Then Vomblé's father said, "What shall I
 do? He is full-grown; yet no one sends a child to him. If you tell Kemblén
 he may be angry. But tell him." When Tondúin told Kemblén he sat in
 silence and at last said: "I shall never send her to some *kéti* who will beat
 her when I am dead and gone. Send her to some one of your affinal rela-
 tives who treats you well. Then he will give you food and ignore me, eat-
 ing it alone. He will not give any to me." "That is what he said," remarked
 Vomblé, as he told it to me; "he was a fool." But in the teeth of Kemblén's
 anger his brother sent Kulí to Vomblé, and he married her. If a young
 couple do not decide to take matters into their own hands they may con-
 tinue as lovers indefinitely. At last someone may take enough interest in
 their affairs to assume the task of go-between. Then in the face of opposi-
 tion they cheerfully settle down—at least for a while—and continue their
 relations with the various parties as if the waters had never been troubled.

584 The culture has so little immediate stake in marriage that it exercises
 itself very little about it. There are no dramatic stories of girls who were
 betrothed to boys they did not like, of sudden passion interrupting a pre-
 arranged marriage, of flight by night and lonely wandering in the forest
 away from enraged parents or from potential in-laws who felt themselves
 cheated of the prize for which they had already paid dearly. There are no
 ramifying laws of incest for the violation of which the culture might ad-
 minister a swift and violent punishment. The assumed personal equality of
 all young people, the dead level of economic conditions, the lack of accu-
 mulated property, and the fact that there are no class lines make all plan-
 ning for a first marriage unnecessary. The relatives of the young man do
 not have to save up over a long period of time to pay for the bride, nor do
 they have to sit awake at night for fear that she might be suddenly raped,
 toppling at one blow the complicated structure of preparation and throw-
 ing the community into an uproar. Kaingáng marriage, except when it
 becomes the temporary concern of some go-between, is the immediate affair
 only of the principals. And even the go-between has no stake in the mar-
 riage. It is true that he (or she) automatically becomes the in-law of the
 young man, but this is not particularly important in a society of myriad
 relationships; and if the young man refuses the young woman who is
 "sent" to him the matter is forgotten.

585 Polygyny comes about in Kaingáng society in the same informal, almost
 accidental manner as monogamic unions. In Kaingáng ideology one of the

snatch away some human being to bear them company. If the ghost longs⁷⁶⁵ to renew intercourse and return at night for this purpose, it is the old spouse who suffers, never the new partner. No woman remains a widow because men are afraid to marry her. The Kaingáng are forever daring the supernatural anyway.

The children belong to their parents, if one can speak of "belonging" in⁵⁹³ a society in which children are not valued as property. What we so strongly idealize the Kaingáng actually feel, for to them children are like highly charged emotional batteries. They are valued for their potentialities as emotionally satisfying living things, like most other pets.¹¹ There is no idea expressed that when they grow up they will feed and protect their parents,¹² for in nomadic days the latter knew only too well the whims that urged and the necessities that compelled their children to wander away from them. They themselves had felt the desire to go north or west or east to see the country or to attack the Brazilians, and they too had left their own parents to follow the camps of their wives' relatives. But when children are left fatherless it often devolves upon the father's family to take care of them, for they feel that responsibility, and it is in this way that it comes about that a widow often marries someone of her husband's kin. She goes where her children are, and it is there, in the midst of her husband's close kin, that she begins her sex life anew and often finds her new husband.^[587]

It is a similar factor of residence that brings it about that in the majority⁵⁹⁵ of cases the co-spouses in a polygynous or polyandrous marriage are either siblings or first cousins. For in the closer relationship that springs up among the members of the families related by marriage the most obvious choice is a person whom one sees all the time and with whom, therefore, one delights to have an affair. Since this choice rests almost wholly with the widow and since it is conditioned by a large number of accidental factors, principally what men are available at the moment, her new husband is as likely to be older than her dead husband as younger. Even when he is past middle age a man is still a vigorous hunter, and even if he is an old man, he can depend on someone to help toward the support of his household. His wife may philander as she will, but she is still his wife, and if he catches or suspects her he may beat her or even put a club through her chest.^[584]

If we were to believe Yafí as quoted by Thunder Storm's son, we could say that Thunder Storm acquired his third wife because he was an outstanding figure. But I am inclined to doubt this. His third wife was

¹¹ The Kaingáng, like many South American peoples, keep pet monkeys, pigs, quail and hawks. Only the latter are used—for their feathers. Dogs are not pets; emotionally they belong outside the category of unrelated human beings.

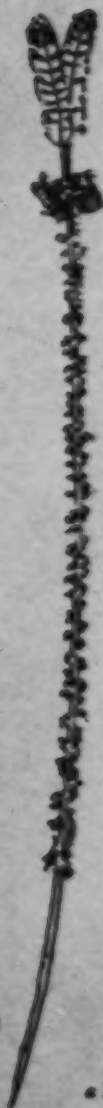
¹² It is true, nevertheless, that the parents could generally depend to some extent on their children's help, particularly before marriage.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941

SM3 Catigang SM3
Awelikama

PLATE VII

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a Dance costume Kandjida b La

[facing p. 183]